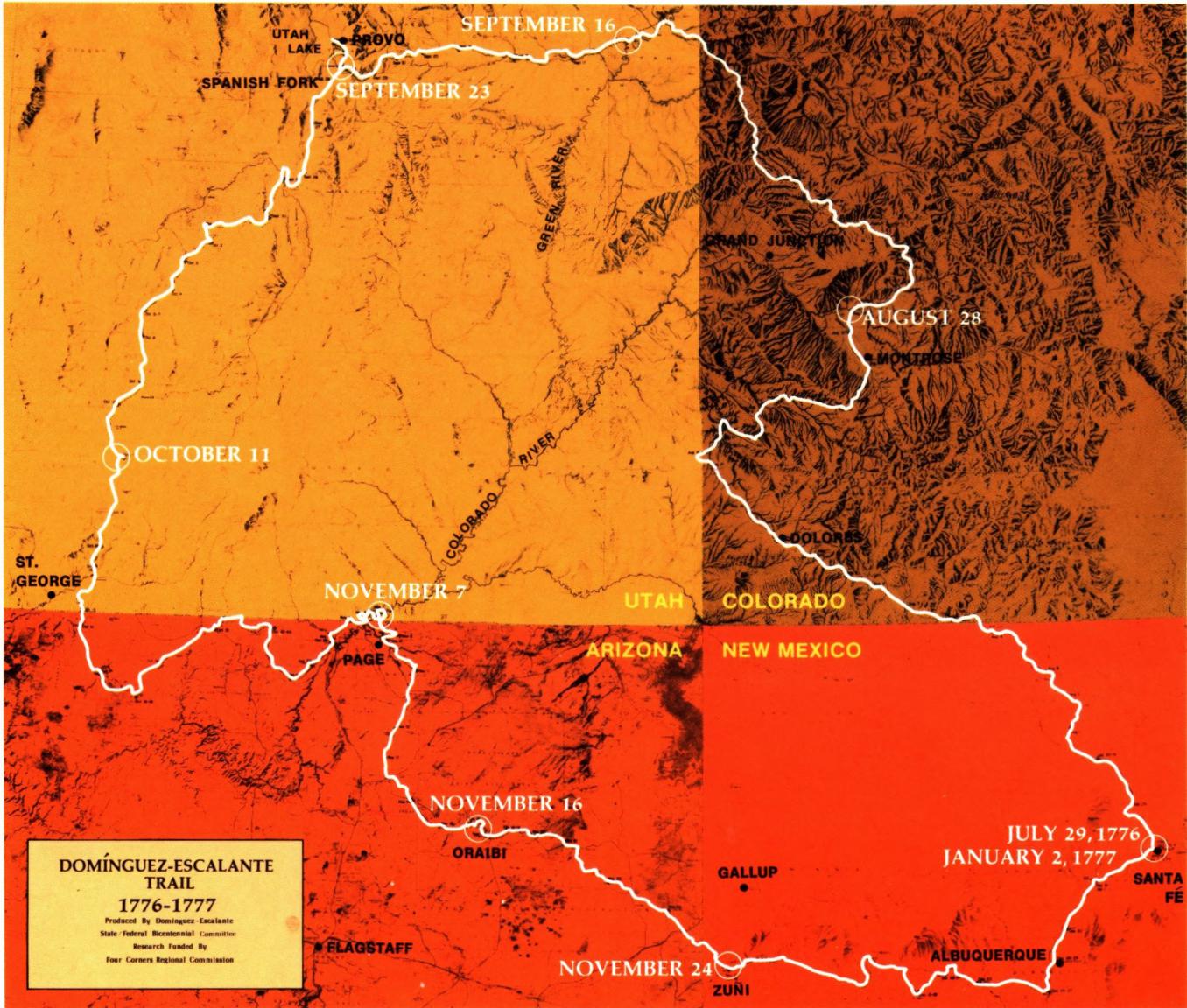


# IN BEHALF OF THE LIGHT

THE DOMÍNGUEZ AND ESCALANTE  
EXPEDITION OF 1776



by Joseph Cerquone



• Dernière page. Diazo.

El dia 29 Julio del año de 1776 bajo del patrocinio de la Virgen Maria <sup>así</sup>  
concedida en feudo original, y del V.º Patriarca Trío suplicíssimo Epif.  
Fr. Juan <sup>co</sup> Stanislaus Domínguez actual comis. Visitador de esta curia de los  
Vecindades Pueblo del Nuevo - México, y Fr. Juan Silvestre Pérez de Escalante  
y Fr. José <sup>co</sup> Gómez de la Asunción de N. S. de Guadalupe de Luni acompañando  
nos voluntariamente Fr. Juan Pérez Cuenca gobernador de dich. Pueblo de  
Luni, D. Leonardo Miera, Párroco Cap. Miliciano reformado, y Fr.  
no de la Villa de <sup>ta</sup> Fr. D. Joaquín elain vecino de la misma Villa,  
desplazado de su casa de la Villa de las Flores Nuevo México, grande Apóstol  
<sup>ta</sup> de la Virgen de la Cinta, y su marido implorando el patrocinio de su Virgen, Párroco  
vecino de la Villa de las Flores, y su esposa vecina de la Villa de las Flores Cap. de la  
Fr. Roque del Nuevo México, párroco de Nuevo México al Pueblo de Taxco en donde  
padre no ha venido. Párroco Olegario

Die 20 Anhuring dho<sup>o</sup> yocomar, ómo  
no, y Nicanor al Pueblo del P<sup>o</sup> Rosalechizquieriendo por una incidente es-  
tuvino el dia 21 de Mayo farrada, premio de un Rito e domo del río  
e imploren el auxilio de su santo Patrono.

Día 10 de septiembre pue de haberse celebrado ambos el sacrificio de la misa salmo del Pueblo de Roncador que  
numeroso para capellos y decharra se reunio abonando puebla poco meno  
ro de 200, declinando al noroeste y convirtiéndose en el mediano de mal camino pue  
mi una meritoria mucha piedra paramo a costado en la parte oeste de la montaña  
del litoral de la Piqua Alumbre, junto al río que foso en su nacimiento estan abiertos  
y rendidos de este lado, dicen mareas piedra alumbrada y vera transparente. A  
tande salmos de los 2000 seco sumo norte apoya distancia de uno y alrededor  
de un canon montuoso y alas 200 de mi una mal camino paramos a ca  
ña de dho año ya. Hizo cargo un menor 200 y quedaron 100

Dia 2 de Agosto, traeos vino, fac el numero cuan non sumbo nor  
deste, ya por la mar de quanto de lejua declararano al norte. Entrando por  
un canon mortuero en q' pone el río d. un quarto de lejua traian torque tan  
espeso de nubes pequeno q' al paseo se nos oculta ron en el quarto. Puntian  
q' fuese preciso paraa paraa buscar las ríos q' en brete se habla ron. Faun q' noso-  
tros en este bosq' p'cuidimo. La vereda, perron o ester mujanda, vino des-  
er, q' vira por el lado oriental del arroyo ~~descañillón~~ q' corre por medio del,  
y q' es el mismo, q' mas abajo nombramos arroyo del Canillón, Arroyo se-  
co. Acabado el Pdorq. traian corto llano de ablandante paseo y muy considerable  
ala vista, q' no produce una rosa q' cuya color es verde morado, y blanca q' viene  
son de bellas son muy semejantes al de dicho color. Habi tambien en el monte de

# IN BEHALF OF THE LIGHT

## THE DOMÍNGUEZ AND ESCALANTE EXPEDITION OF 1776

by Joseph Cerquone

*dedicated to Joseph Albi*



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The Domínguez Escalante Bicentennial Expedition  
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Father Silvestre Vélez de Escalante reaffirmed the purpose of the Domínguez and Escalante Expedition of 1776 almost four months after it had started from Santa Fé, New Mexico, with this entry in his diary:

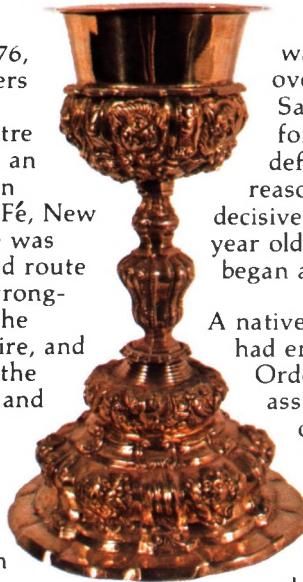
*"We no longer had a thing for eating supper tonight because the horsemeat on hand was not enough for all. There were large cattle heards hereabouts, and all the companions wanted to kill a heifer. They kept impatiently insisting that we should let them relieve the need from which we all were suffering by this means. Realizing that we were already near El Pueblo de Oraibi, this would cause some trouble between us and the Moqui (Hopi) people, and defeat our purpose - which was to exert anew our efforts in behalf of the Light, and meekness of the Gospel."*

November 15, 1776

*F. Silvestre Vélez de Escalante  
Nov. Sec.*

 On July 29, 1776, Franciscan Fathers Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante led an exploration party of ten horsemen from Santa Fé, New Mexico. Their purpose was to establish an overland route between Santa Fé, a stronghold on the fringe of the declining Spanish empire, and Monterey, California, the main Spanish presidio and cultural center of the Pacific Coast, while carrying a crusading message of religion to the native peoples they hoped to meet on the way.

Both priests were enthusiastic, and new to the Southwest. Born in Mexico, Domínguez did not arrive in Santa Fé until March, 1775. As head of all New Mexico missions, he was ordered by ecclesiastical superiors to carry out a three-fold assignment. Initially, he was to conduct an official inspection of his missions and make a complete and detailed report of both their spiritual and economic status. Secondly, he was to survey the Spanish Archives of New Mexico in Santa Fé and determine their historical nature. Many New Mexican records had been destroyed by the Pueblo Indians during their revolt in 1680. Finally, Domínguez



was to establish an overland route from Santa Fé to Monterey for economic, political, defensive and military reasons. Ever a man of decisiveness and action, the 35 year old administrator quickly began attending to his tasks.

A native of Spain, Escalante had entered the Franciscan Order in Mexico and had assumed duties as pastor of the Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zuñi Mission in 1774.

Although he was only 25 years old, Escalante was an astute observer and able writer whose reports and opinions were valued and circulated by the highest governmental, ecclesiastical and military officials for guidance to the complicated problems of administering the vast provinces of New Spain.

During his assignment at Zuñi, Escalante developed a strong interest in the Moqui, or Hopi, Indians to the mission's northwest. The following year, he visited their land for one week, hoping to learn from the natives if the territory to their west lent itself to the possibility of opening communications with the Spaniards in California. The Franciscan heard discouraging reports of cannibals who

ate the flesh of those they killed in battle and of a deep impassable gorge that stretched for miles. A further barrier loomed in the Hopi's refusal to accept Catholicism. Years of abuse by missionaries during the 17th century had imbedded a profound mistrust of priests in the natives' minds. Thus, Escalante surmised that the way to Monterey was most likely to be west and northwest of the Hopis, through the lands of the Yutas to the north.

In the spring of 1776, Father Domínguez summoned the Zuñi pastor to Santa Fé to report his discoveries about conditions west of the Hopi and to discuss prospects of an expedition. The priests decided to commence an exploration that summer. Only the region east of the Colorado River as far north as the Gunnison River was fairly well known to the Spaniards of this era. Sent by the Governor of New Mexico to check reports of silver mines, Juan María de Rivera had already conducted expeditions into southwestern Colorado. Traders also engaged in clandestine trade with Indians to the north, exchanging Spanish goods for pelts. Domínguez and Escalante may have planned to follow the established traders' trail northwest past Mesa Verde,

descend the Dolores River and the Colorado, and then turn west to Monterey through a pass in the High Sierras which another Franciscan, Francisco Garcés, had used while he was in California's San Joaquín Valley. Their original intentions would soon be forgotten, however, as the explorers adjusted to conditions in the unknown north.

Don Pedro Fermín de Mendareta, Governor of New Mexico, agreed to support the Franciscans and preparations were undertaken for the journey. One of the most ambitious endeavors in the history of the Spanish-American West was soon to begin.

## Expeditioners and Guides of the Domínguez and Escalante Expedition of 1776



**Father Francisco Atanasio Domínguez**, 35, native of Mexico, head of all New Mexico missions, expedition leader

**Father Silvestre Vélez De Escalante**, 24, native of Spain, pastor of Zuñi mission, expedition diarist/recorder

**Captain Don Bernardo Miera Y Pacheco**, mid-fifties, native of Spain, citizen of Santa Fé, member Santa Fé Militia, retired artillery officer, expedition cartographer

**Andrés Muñiz**, young *genízaro* (Hispanicized Indian), citizen of Bernalillo, trader, expedition interpreter

**Antonio Lucrecio Muñiz**, a *genízaro*, brother of Andrés, from Embudo, a town north of Santa Fé

**Don Pedro Cisneros**, *alcalde* (mayor) of Zuñi

**Don Joaquín Laín**, native of Spain, citizen of Zuñi

**Lorenzo Olivares**, a citizen of El Paso

**Juan De Aguilar**, a citizen of Bernalillo

**Simón Lucero**, probably a young *genízaro* of Zuñi, servant to Don Pedro Cisneros

**Felipe and Juan Domingo**, runaway *genízaro* servants from Abiquiu, join the expedition two weeks after it leaves Santa Fé

**Atanasio**, a Sabagana Yuta, encounters the expedition almost a month after it leaves Santa Fé and leads it to the Sabagana Yuta encampment on the western slope of Colorado's Rocky Mountains

**Silvestre**, a Laguna from Utah Lake, guides the expedition from the Sabagana encampment to the Laguna villages on Utah Lake

**Joaquín**, a young Laguna boy, rides with the expedition from the Sabagana encampment to Santa Fé

**José María**, a Laguna, from the villages on Utah Lake, guides the expedition for two weeks after it leaves the Utah Valley



Pain consumes his side.

Father Silvestre Vélez de Escalante lies in bed asking God to forgive his impatience with unforeseen delays. He hears his superior, Father Francisco Atanasio Domínguez talking to the old physician whose bony hands are unable to hold instruments firmly.

Raiding Indian bands have attacked La Ciénega, New Mexico, and have killed ten soldiers. Quickly, a scouting expedition of presidial troops had formed and the young priest had ridden as its chaplain. Upon his return, Father Domínguez had sent him to Taos on urgent matters which he, Domínguez, would have attended to himself, had he not been busy meeting with Governor Mendinueta in preparation for the summer's expedition.

Then the pain had come. A stabbing sensation twisting deeper and deeper into him. Escalante struggles out of bed to relieve himself. He shuffles to the door and stands stooped in the light, another life wilting under the relentless desert sun. He can see Domínguez gradually disappearing in the south, his horse trailing tidy clouds of dust across the horizon. "Rest," his superior had ordered him.

The pain intensifies. Unrelieved, Escalante eyes the heavens and wonders aloud, "Does my own blood flow as a greater barrier than the unknown rivers of this land?"

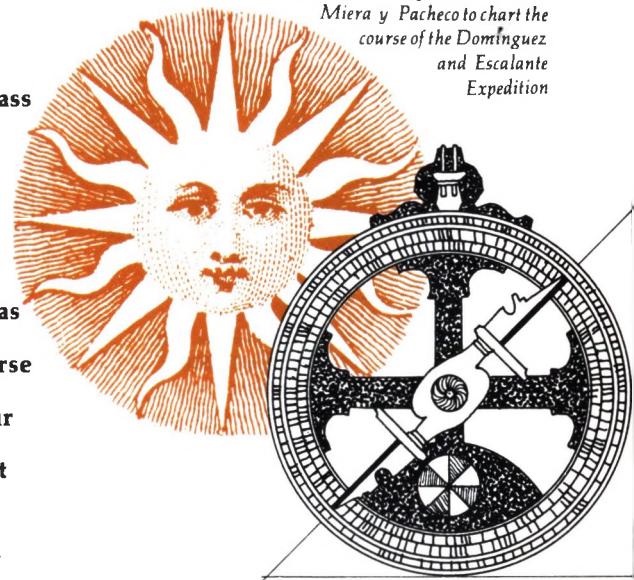
Dawn, July 29th. Except for a small group of men and horses, Santa Fé sleeps. Captain Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco gently strokes his animals and checks the equipment he will need as cartographer. A warm smile forms on his lips. The astrolabe and compass have been packed well, protected from unforeseen mishaps, but accessible to record discoveries at a moment's notice.

Miera loves this land. For over 20 years, frontier life has unfailingly suited his independent nature and diverse interests. Once a captain at El Paso, he had served in four campaigns against Indians. Engineering, art, government service, and mapmaking had occupied the time away from war. Miera had decided long ago to take each breath as though it were his last, to throw himself at life with the urgency of a soldier rushing into combat.

His eyes search for the priests. Neither one has been seen since Mass earlier in the morning. Escalante had been

JULY 29 - AUGUST 27

*The astrolabe and the sun were two valuable instruments used by Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco to chart the course of the Domínguez and Escalante Expedition*



*(opposite page) La Ville de Santa Fé (1776)  
Painting by Wilson Hurley from WITHOUT  
NOISE OF ARMS: THE 1776  
DOMÍNGUEZ-ESCALANTE SEARCH  
FOR A ROUTE FROM SANTA FÉ TO  
MONTEREY*

© by Walter Briggs, Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona,  
1976

pale from his recent illness. Miera had asked the priest if he felt well enough to make the long journey ahead and his inquiry was dismissed by a listless wave of the hand. To Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, it was the gesture of a determined soldier.

Soon, all of the men are assembled. The riders mount and begin to follow a well beaten path north out of Santa Fé. Sweat tickles their spines and a few curse the juniper-covered hills. There is half-hearted mention of inadequate supplies and of it being too late in the year to begin an exploration into unknown land. "At least we are being paid," offers Lorenzo Oliveras. "The very least," replies Don Joaquín Lain, and a ripple of nervous laughter goes through the men.

Domínguez cannot hear complaints. His optimism has risen with the heat, and he thinks only of how fortunate he is to be leading such an important undertaking. Looking into the sun, the fire of the universe, he sees the heart of God.

Andrés Muñiz was not expecting the loneliness the others spoke of. The previous year he had travelled north

as far as the Gunnison River with Juan María de Rivera. He knew that the natives in the north, unlike those around Santa Fé, offered women to whomever they trusted. Muñiz was liked. He spoke the language of the Yutas and brought them the luxuries of cooking pots, wool, and knives strong enough to split rock. In return, the Indians traded him pelts which Andrés sold to the Spaniards at prices high enough to make the winter a comfortable season indeed.

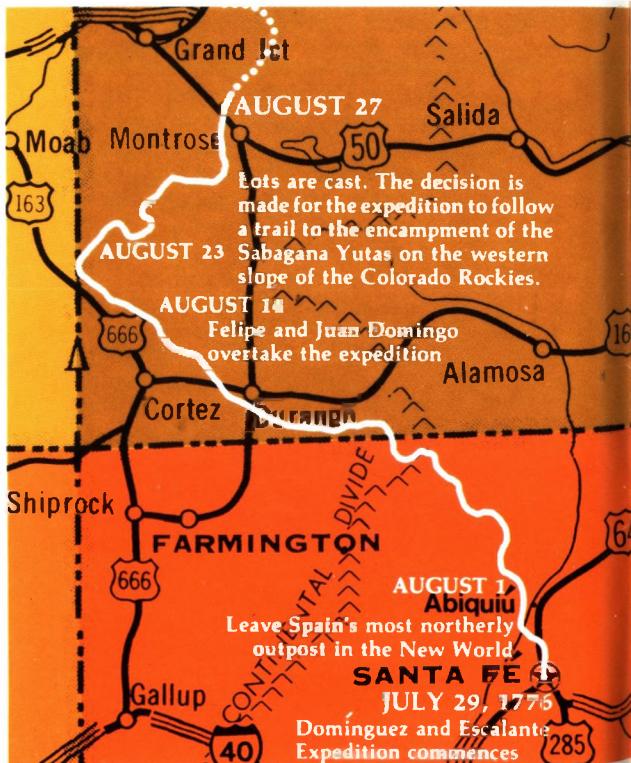
As the explorers move up the Chama River, the landscape silently swallows the buildings of Abiquiu. Only one rider, Andrés Muñiz, recognizes the horizon ahead.

The quicksand will not let go. Don Pedro Cisneros kicks hard, his large spurs half disappearing into the animal's belly.

It is useless. He leaps from his mount and barely manages to reach hard ground. The horse's eyes turn wild. Grunting, the large head strains to stay above the mire, its nostrils continually enlarging. Cisneros reaches for a pistol and takes aim. The eyes are now wide and unseeing as they sink. Hills of sand absorb the shot.

No matter what they are - Spaniard, Mexican, *genízaro* - the men are growing used to each other. One sleeps with an eye open. Another, it is sworn, shakes poplars with his breathing during the night. Limits take shape and become known. Bonds of fellowship form which Felipe and Juan Domingo, runaway servants from Abiquiu, cannot see as they track the riders.

"What can we expect of these fugitives with nothing to lose?"





Brother Domínguez hears the question asked of him over and over again, but he hasn't an answer. Instead, the runaways are allowed into camp where they can be watched and limits, once again, are unknown. The bonds of fellowship suddenly become old. A harsh wind rises, tearing them away. No one is completely at ease any longer.

Following the Dolores River seemed like a good idea. It flowed north and was a path through the rock. But soon the river begins to twist and turn until days are spent covering the distance of hours. The horses leave blood on the land and the feeling grows: we are unwitting players in a cruel game.

Domínguez kneels, the walls of the box canyon looming behind him. He looks at Miera (that Miera . . . always disappearing! Always first through an opening. When he finally entered camp the other night, I still couldn't see him for the light) and reminds the rest of the men, who have begun to kneel with him, that Andrés has reported Indian tracks. "We are probably being watched by the natives this very instant. Please end this confusion. Let us set a good example. Forget your different opinions and leave

decisions up to the Almighty. A way forward must be decided."

Once the prayers begin, the priest shuts all thought from his mind to concentrate on the rosary. The men's voices become one voice echoing through the canyon, startling birds. As a flock flies toward the higher cliffs, Domínguez reaches to choose one of two lots sticking from Escalante's fist.

*God speaks to all: Backtrack and follow the trail to the Sabagana Yutas.*

The riders come upon a Sabagana Yuta shortly after leaving the Dolores River Valley. The Yuta is promised knives and beads, and agrees to lead the strangers to the encampment of his people. Called Atanasio after Father Domínguez, he doesn't respond to the name until miles of yelling, "Atanasio! Atanasio! Slow down!" have passed.

The scenery becomes pleasant.

Firewood, water and game abound. "It is an eminence of very good pastures," writes Escalante of the Uncompahgre Plateau.

Everyone is hungry when the rains come. The fire hisses and spits. Huddled in blankets under trees, the men are caught in smoke. Recollections are murmured about Santa Fé and homes now far behind them.

" . . . we met a Yuta, called the Left-Handed, with his family. We tarried a good while with him and after a lengthy conversation drew forth nothing more useful than that we had suffered the sun's heat, which was indeed very fiery all the while the talk lasted."

# AUGUST 28 - SEPTEMBER 15

To save horses and prevent the further trading of valuable supplies, Domínguez sends Andrés Muñiz and Atanasio ahead to find the Yuta tents.

Shouts drift across the river into camp. A band of Indians appears on the surrounding hills. Eventually, they come among the Spaniards, eating, smoking and warning the priests to turn back or be killed by enemies, natives who live in the north and raid the homes of the Yutas and Lagunas.

Domínguez calmly answers them, "God, the Father of all, will protect us."

"Dogs will drag your hearts through their villages!" cry the Yutas.

Atanasio and Andrés return, accompanied by Yutas and a Laguna who is persuaded to guide the priests west to the village of his people. The Sabaganas, freely enjoying the Spaniards' food and tobacco, insist that the explorers visit their tents.

"We'd better go, Brother Atanasio," advises Escalante. "This may be a plan to detain us, but if you refuse, we could lose the Laguna."

Domínguez realizes there is

little choice in the matter and consents. As the riders move toward the Indian encampment, a Sabagana who earlier had attacked the strangers' offering with particular zeal slumps in his saddle with indigestion. Shaking a finger at the Franciscans, he accuses them of poisoning his food. Silently, priests ask God to strike the Devil gnawing the man's intestines.

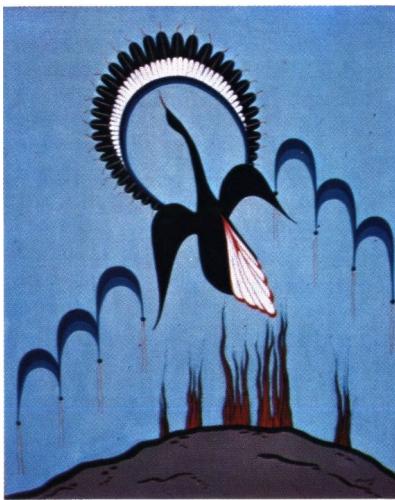
The Indian vomits enormously and forgets his pain. "Glory to God in the highest," whisper the priests, over and over.

Muñiz is afraid. He gathers his brother Lucrecio and the genízaro Felipe around him.

"Domínguez is a fool. The Yutas tell of enemies without mercy, but he insists on continuing. Why can't he be happy to have come this far? The Sabaganas listened to him preach for hours. What more does he want?"

"He wants to get us killed." Lucrecio's mouth is tightly drawn and surrenders the words slowly. "All he cares about is spreading the word of God - with our blood."

There is a pause. Then Andrés speaks. "Lucrecio, we aren't



going anywhere without  
fresh horses."

"But they have already been  
promised," cautions Felipe.

"The Yutas trust me. They may  
listen to what I have to say."

Andrés Muñíz cannot control  
his fear. Walking softly  
toward the dimly lighted tents,  
he sees the stars wandering  
above him.

The Green River told the  
men to rest. It was wide and  
deep and the animals would  
struggle to the opposite  
bank. Unseen, Joaquín, the  
young Laguna boy, mounts  
a stallion. It is the horse

Juan de Aguilar rode to hunt  
the buffalo everyone ate of  
two nights before.

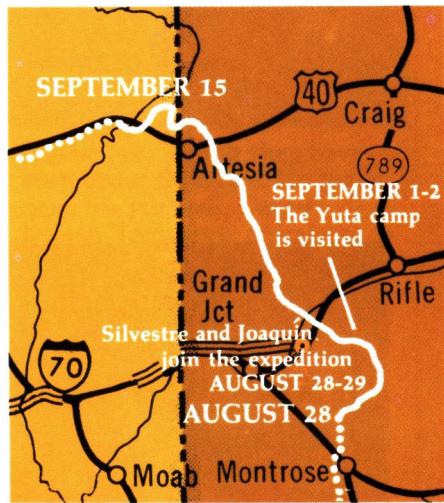
Joaquín had heard the arguing  
in the Sabagana camp. The  
one called Andrés Muñíz  
urged the Indians not to give  
horses to the Spaniards. The  
chiefs listened to Muñíz  
until the priest, Father  
Domínguez, reminded them  
that they had promised him  
horses, and that if the  
Sabaganas were his true  
friends as they claimed to be,  
they would keep their word.  
The boy liked Domínguez. The  
priest was patient and  
gentle and hurt clouded his  
eyes when the name of Andrés  
was mentioned. When the  
chiefs saws the hurt, too,  
they gave Domínguez the  
horses he asked for.

The young Laguna boy did not  
like his age. Too old to  
play the harmless games of  
children, and too young to  
hunt buffalo, bear and elk, he  
was an orphan longing for  
adventure. His decision to go  
with these strange men had  
been the most important  
one of his life. When Don  
Joaquín Laín pulled him up into  
the saddle, he felt important  
at last. Only Silvestre, the  
other Laguna guiding  
Domínguez, dared to cross into  
the dangerous lands west  
of the village.

"Joaquín! Joaquín! Joaquín!"

Joaquín does not hear the  
shouting from camp. Wind and  
the pounding of hooves  
fill his ears. The horse, its head  
no longer bobbing, quickly  
forgets the boy, and strains  
to stretch out and down.  
Domínguez is running behind  
the great animal when it  
stumbles among the holes  
along the riverbank, throwing  
Joaquín high into the air.

The priest feels the boy's tears  
on his skin. Days of foolishness  
and rabbit hunting wash  
away. The stallion rises and  
falls, its neck broken.



# SEPTEMBER 16 - SEPTEMBER 22

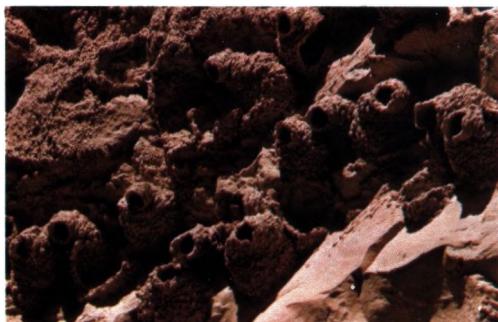
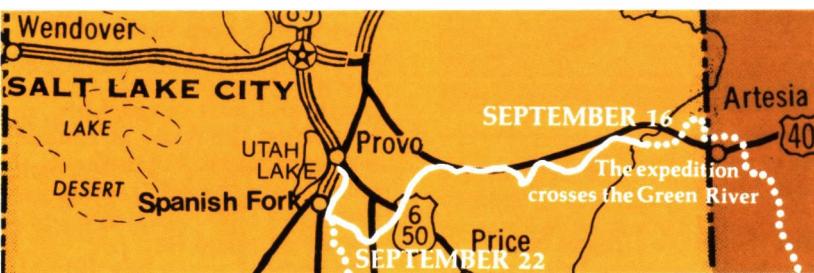
Silvestre listens carefully to the darkness. It is cold and the Laguna longs for a fire's warmth, but is afraid of sleeping in light. He doesn't want to awaken to find enemies standing over him.

The Indian feels distrusted and unjustly blamed for loose rock injuring the horses' hooves and paths obscured by buffalo herds. Although the priests and Lain keep reminding everyone that

Silvestre's blanket. When he walks into camp at dawn, the Spaniards' hearts are closed and hard. They speak of the cold and curse the Laguna.

Father Escalante gazes at the bird nests. They are like tiny pueblos, one atop the other, with dark holes for entrances and exits.

The priest reflects upon his faraway Zuñi mission. "There



Swallows' nests

Photograph by Henry A. Schach

crossing the Green River has gone easily, no one listens. This Laguna guide is unacceptable. The marshes are agonizingly slow to travel. The men remember how well Atanasio had guided them and how unfortunate they are that he was a Yuta considered too indispensable to lead strangers across enemy lands.

is so much to be done. Are all of the children baptized? Will I still be needed? Am I missed? God alone knows when, if ever, I will return."

The swallows' songs add a lightness to the land, making the horsemen relax. Joaquín holds two large trout in hands stiff from the cold water. He insists on cleaning them as Miera rises, stokes the fire, and kneels to open the fish for the boy.

All night, a west wind blows over the valley and through

Horses slipping in the

underbrush send a crackle through the forest. Domínguez rides as far as possible and dismounts. It pains him to walk, but he must not lose the guide, Silvestre, filtering through the poplars like a soft breeze. The priest bends for a moment to run a hand over his knee. A large lump is forming where the branch had struck.

The riders reorganize in a clearing and follow Silvestre down one canyon and then another, Dominguez and Escalante between the Indian and others strung out over the rock. Complaints echo anew. This time the pace is too fast rather than too slow. Had Silvestre been within hearing distance, however, he wouldn't have paid attention. The land is beginning to look like home. His journey will end with the day.

The priests finally reach their guide halted atop a rise. After a moment's silence, Domínguez exclaims, "Glory to God in the Highest!" as he beholds miles of lush green valley spread below. The Laguna village is situated to the northwest on a lake of the deepest blue, the largest body of water the Franciscans have ever seen in the new world. Escalante sighs and looks at Dominguez. "There is all of the water we have



been praying for, Brother Atanasio." Utah Lake stretches before them; they are the first Europeans to see its waters.

Puffs of smoke rise in the distance, carry in the wind and then dissipate, spiked by the tree tops. Domínguez orders the signals answered immediately. "We must be careful not to frighten these people," he says. "There will be much work to be done here. I want to take time to make sure they understand that we come in peace."

The night before they enter the Laguna village, the men

realize how wrong they have been about Silvestre. He has done his job well. Danger is past. Tomorrow promises food, fresh water, and rest. Still, the Laguna does not sleep. Standing at the edge of the camp, he calls out in the night, "Do not be afraid, my brothers. We have come in peace. We are your friends!

His cries go unanswered.



**Images are in the water.**

Silvestre admires ribbons and woolens the priests have given him for the occasion. Calmly, Domínguez listens to Andres translate the Gospel as Escalante blesses the surrounding faces, saying, "God, the Great King, will send you everything that is needed."

Slowly, the Lagunas drop their weapons to discuss whether or not these words mean protection from the enemies who steal food and children. They fall silent, observing Joaquín nestle against the robes of the priest.

Winds come from the north. Leaves blow down, covering the lake.

Three days among the Lagunas go well. The natives are willing to be Christians and offer land to the Spaniards. A deerskin is presented as a token of friendship. Authority figures are painted on the hide, the boldest heavily decorated with a red pigment suggesting blood. As Miera packs the skin, his imagination runs wild. The valley is a veritable Eden, large enough to support several communities. Resources of water, timber and climate could mean many farms. Even during periods of

difficulty, surely no one would starve amidst the abundant fish and game.

Silvestre, a hero among his people for bringing these friends who promise an end to hardships, moves through the men, hugging each. He will guide the priests no farther, for a Laguna, whom Domínguez has already named José María, is taking his place.

The riders mount. Diligently, the natives repeat, "*Jesus, María! Jesus, María!*" exactly as Father Domínguez has instructed them to do, when he said, "This will protect you from harm until our return next year."

Simón Lucero must sleep. Driving the herd was a long and fruitless search for water. The friendliness of natives south of the lake cannot change the surrounding expanse of heat, sagebrush and sand.

Soon the sun will arise to torment him anew. Lucero lies under a poplar, watching horses stray into the desert. Bones jut out in the moonlight. Shadows hover between ribs. Heads lower and sway, hooves dragging beneath them. Occasionally, one horse abruptly rises above the rest to utter pitiful cries of frustration, then bursts away. Apart and

**SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 10**

(opposite page) *Sunrise over southwestern Utah*  
Photograph by Stephen Trimble

alone, it lowers its head again.

One by one, the stars diminish.  
In the long moments before  
closing his eyes, Simón  
Lucero cannot see the slightest  
difference between himself  
and the animals thirsting  
in the distance.

Andrés Muñiz holds his swollen cheek. His mount has kicked him with the vengeance born of an empty belly. Drops of blood puncture the thin white alkali covering the arroyo.

Muñiz is dizzy and wants to lie down, to press his wound against this remarkable patch of earth with the appearance of linen.

"Do not look sad, Brother Atanasio," Escalante's voice is soft, almost a whisper. "There was nothing you could do. Nothing."

Father Domínguez is upset. The Laguna guide, José María, has left camp early this morning without saying a word to anyone, apparently frightened away by a fight the previous evening between Don Pedro Cisneros and Simón Lucero.

"Brother Silvestre, this causes me to ask if our efforts



are in vain. Hours are spent preaching love and understanding to the infidels and our own people set such poor examples. Of all times to quarrel, they choose to fight during recital of the rosary." The veins rise in his temples. "A soul has been lost because of petty disagreements. God, give me the strength to suffer these travails!"

Shaking his head even before Domínguez has finished, Escalante responds quickly, "He isn't lost forever, dear Brother. We shall find José María upon our return to the villages next year."

Next year. The words stir

concerns within Domínguez that he has harbored for several days. The need to confide in someone overpowers him as he rides beside his young assistant. The priests steadily fall behind the others.

"Brother Silvestre, I have been thinking a lot about next year. Much worries me. Already snow has covered our camp. The horses are having difficulty negotiating the land. Supplies have gradually been traded away in searches for guides. Today, we have neither. Crossing the mountains to the west may mean death for us all by starvation or exposure." Domínguez pulls his horse to

a stop. "But, most importantly, should the journey to Monterey be continued, I doubt there will be time for us to return to the Lagunas next year as we have promised. Our word broken, we would be no better an example than Cisneros or Lucero."

Escalante glances admiringly at his superior. "As always, Brother Atanasio, your thoughts are of others and your concerns are real. I must admit that Monterey does not seem as important to me as it once did. The valley of the Lagunas presents an unexpected opportunity for much good to be done. Many



highly placed in the Church, and Governor Mendieta as well will be most pleased to hear of it. I believe as strongly as you that we must return next year as promised and begin our work of establishing missions. But . . . I am afraid."

Domínguez jerks his head back. "Afraid, Brother Silvestre? Of what?"

"Afraid that some of the men, Captain Miera, Muñiz and others, would be gravely disappointed by any change in plans. You know how they are. Their minds are always on the riches that will be theirs through the opening of a trade route. They will not relinquish dreams of riches easily."

Joaquín turns around and gallops toward the priests, apparently to determine what is keeping them. The cold whips through his shirt. Domínguez watches Joaquín approach as he speaks to his assistant.

"Brother Silvestre, I do not care what the others think. That boy's welfare is my responsibility. If he were to die as a result of some foolish decision on my part, I could never forgive myself."

Joaquín, with a look of grave

concern, is now only a few yards from the priests. Once more Domínguez tells himself how much he loves the boy before he announces, "I must admit the obvious, Brother Silvestre. It is time to return to Santa Fé; to continue would be reckless folly."



Late 18th century  
monstrance  
Old Mission  
Santa Barbara, California

*" . . . we therefore feared that long before we got there (Monterey) the passes would be closed to us, so that they would force us to stay two or three months in some sierra where there might not be any people or the wherewithal for our necessary sustenance."*

October 8, 1776

# OCTOBER 11 - NOVEMBER 6

Father Escalante was right. The Muñiz brothers and Lain question the fathers' wish to return to Santa Fé, but it is Miera who adamantly opposes the idea.

"Monterey is less than a week away!" he insists. "Why have we struggled this far? To turn back and be nothing but failures in the eyes of our countrymen?"

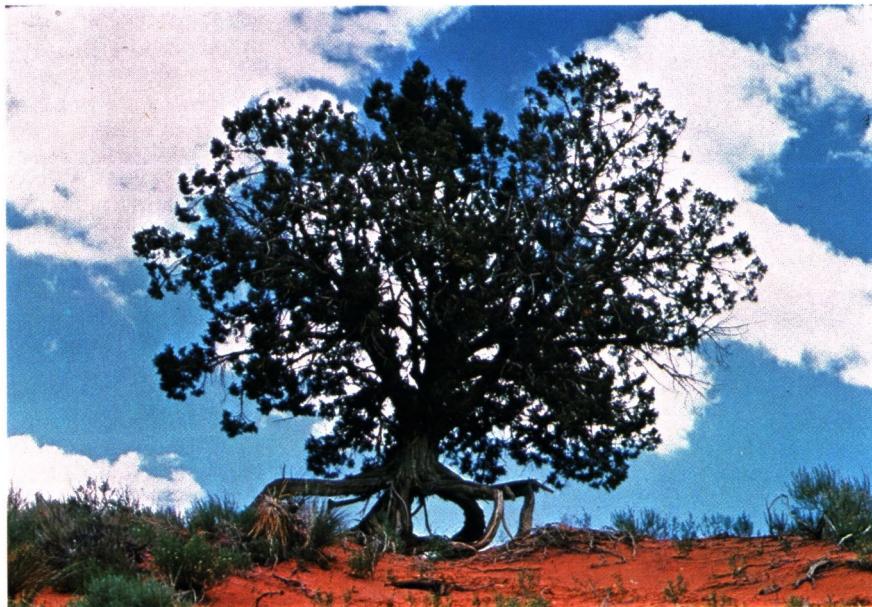
"He should know," adds Andrés Muñiz. "He is a cartographer, isn't he?"

Conversation amongst the Spaniards grows increasingly

irritable. Forced to compromise, Domínguez chooses to put the decision in the hands of God, with a special reservation.

"Let us cast lots for the answer," he tells them. "But, Captain Miera, if the heavens look kindly upon Monterey, you will lead us into the mountains and be responsible for any who fall in the cold."

All agree to abide by the outcome, and a scene unfolds reminiscent of one weeks ago in the Dolores River Valley. The men kneel in a tight circle and recite penitential



"Walking Tree", Coyote Springs, Arizona

Photograph by W. L. Rusho

psalms and rosaries for over an hour. Escalante, again, is the first to rise. He takes the two lots in his hands and faces Dominguez, who gazes heavenward and slowly extends an arm to choose. Only when the lot is firmly within his grasp does he look down to see what is written upon it. Domínguez's eyes open wide and immediately he raises them again. Clouds blow quickly across the sky. It is as though the heavens are preparing to part. The priest calls out. "Lord, Thy will be done. We shall return to Santa Fé as You have commanded."

Days afterwards, Miera is ill. Most of the men are weak and tired, except the servants who secretly eat squash obtained from the local natives. Escalante feels the hardened bits of chocolate in his pockets and knows that a horse will have to be killed for meat once water is found. The magnitude of Dominguez's victory is clear. "Although this expedition is without food," he observes, "at least Santa Fé, thank God, is now the distant light."

The lone Indian they encounter in the desert is very frightened, but offers to bring them to his village. There an old man appears, who listens to the strangers and announces that he and

the Indian who had brought them to the village will guide the riders further south.

Far down a canyon, the two Indians vanish among the rocks. They pick the perfect spot to escape. It will take awhile for the Spaniards to backtrack. Enough time for the entire village to disappear.

Horses tumble and fall, but no one says a word. Weary as they are, the men grudgingly admire the natives' cleverness.

Piñon nuts and cactus pears dry the throat of Lorenzo Olivares. He leaves camp hoping to reach water before the animals, who drain every pool that is found.

The priests worry over him that night and all the next morning when Olivares, sitting up in mud and threatening to break the bones of any horse within ten feet of him, is approached.

Don Pedro Cisneros ponders the Río Colorado below.

It flows muddy brown. Hard looking. (Perhaps the animals can walk to the other side). Purpose weights its waters. Rock is being torn away. The land looks bruised and seamed. Sound wells up

the purple canyon walls. The earth is grumbling.

Don Pedro is thirsty and cannot see a way to down the bank from atop the overlook. He isn't sure he wants to, remembering stories told about the ferocity of the river, about how one dipping his hand for a drink may lose a finger or two.



Two men enter the river, so that if one starts to drown, the other man may save him. When Cisneros reported the Río

Colorado, he and his companion were as weak from hunger and thirst as the rest of the expeditioners. Only now, they are colder. Much colder as the current pushes against them. Both begin to struggle. Both lose the clothing bundled above their heads.

They are swept from the sight of those on the cliff. Around a bend, the waters discard them gasping, their bodies glistening in the sun, like fish stranded on the riverbank.

The raft is built, but not

without difficulty. Material is scarce. Laín had been amazed, coming upon the tree. There, in the open, tall and spreading, it looked like enough wood to build a ship.

Three times the raft leaves shore, and three times it drifts back. Domínguez almost curses the poles. They are too short.

A week of frustration passes. The Muñíz brothers explore a crossing site and camp is established upstream. Another horse is killed for food. Its death challenges the river for the men's attention. Blood seeps into the holes of their worn bootsoles.

The pace is excruciatingly slow. Hours are lost climbing half-mile long inclines. The river is a hundred feet below.

"Where is the ford you discovered?" asks Domínguez.

Andrés Muñíz cannot look at the priest.

"You . . . you can't see it from here."

"From where, then? Give me some idea."

"I can't say. This land is too confusing. Rock is rock, Father.

It looks the same wherever you go."

"Will it take another day to reach?"

"Look. It was dark . . ."

"Should camp be made here for the night?"

"I was tired."

"When can we try to cross the river?"

"I don't know. I don't know."

Water continues to tear away rock. The earth grumbles; the river sweeps on.

"You don't know, Andrés, because you've never known."

"What?"

"Never known the worry you cause me or the lives you gamble with."

"What are you talking about?"

"Never known the meaning of faith. Never known trust in God. Never known anything except your own greed and selfishness."

"You're crazy!"

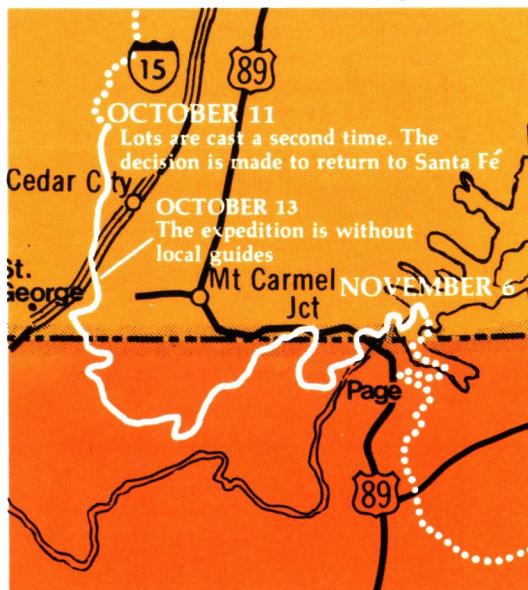
"You don't know, Andrés Muñíz, because you never found a place to cross the river."

You only wasted time looking for Indians to satisfy a carnal appetite. Didn't you? Didn't you?"

The earth continues grumbling.

A third horse is slaughtered. The priests huddle under a cliff reciting the Virgin's Litany, avoiding a mixture of rain and snow splattering the blood. Juan Domingo reports that Lucrecio has crossed the river and explores a trail wearing only the shirt on his back.

Escalante is angry with himself.



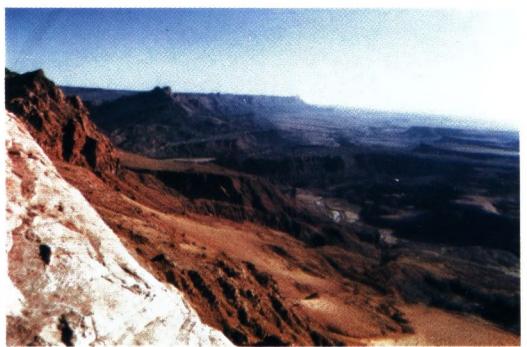
He doesn't want to doubt but finds himself doing so. The feeling scratches at his ribs like an animal testing a cage. But to whom can weakness be confessed? Surely not Domínguez. The man has endured too much, he's carried so much responsibility; sickness, the cold, the unknown, the whims of the party and now - the river.

"Look at it," the young Franciscan tells himself. "Look at that river. Brown and foaming. Lathered. Coming from, going to . . . where? It doesn't flow. No, no. It doesn't do that. It is the very opposite of movement. Listen to the earth grumble. Perhaps that river could pick itself right up if it wanted to and go anywhere. Into the dry native villages hereabouts. Give them fields, something to eat besides piñon nuts and cactus pears. Instead, it carries on in this hellish place. Going down, down, pressing harder against the belly of the earth. Lord, what of this river? This land? What does it all mean? So much is demanded. I've given and now . . . I am tired. Very tired. I know I am younger than Brother Atanasio and supposed to be stronger. But we have been beside this wild river so long . . . too long."

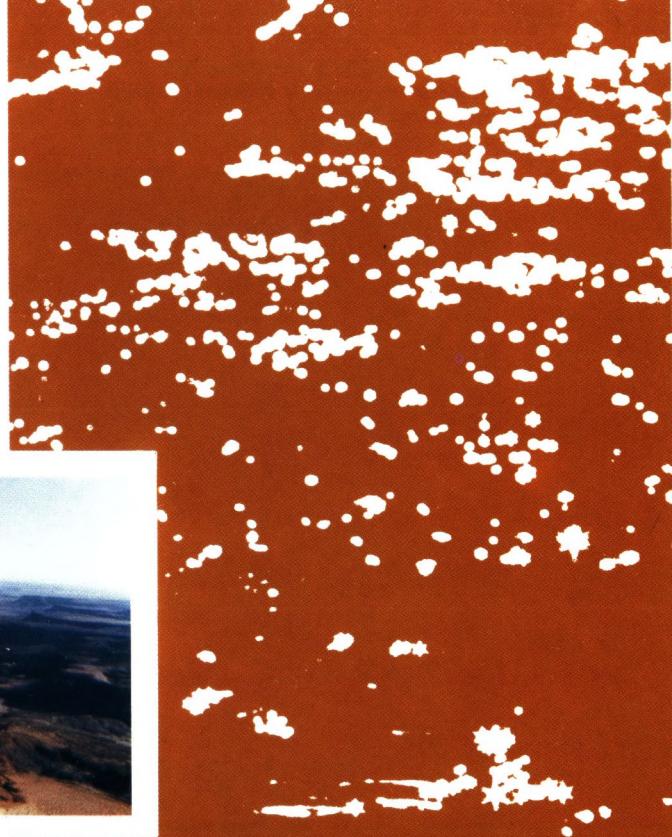
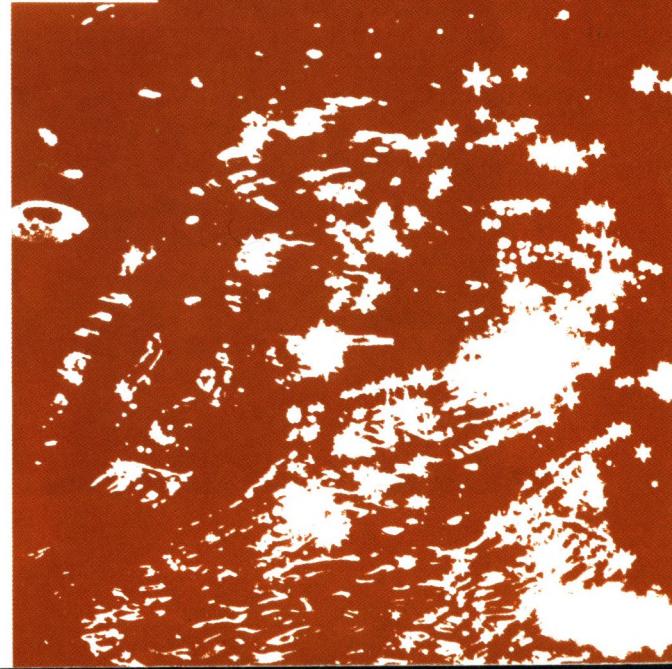
Lucrecio is telling Domínguez

of a place where the river can be crossed. The priest listens, but will not be fooled a second time. The men and horses are too weary to be moved without good reason. Domínguez goes ahead to explore the site with people he can trust. Escalante is the first one asked to mount up.

Photograph by W. L. Rusho



Photograph by Stephen Trimble



# NOVEMBER 7 - NOVEMBER 15

Felipe and Juan Domingo, men who have never been entirely trusted by the Spaniards, laugh, a river's light swirl tickling their waists. Could this be the Colorado? They are the first to reach the other side. First across, because neither Dominguez nor Escalante is agile in the water. The priests must be content to watch from shore.

The crossing completed, baggage and packs are lowered on ropes. Horses warily test the footholds chopped into rock. Returning from the opposite bank, Felipe and Juan Domingo playfully splash each other, here, where the river is a gentle three feet deep.



Petroglyph inscribed on a wall near the point where the Domínguez-Escalante Trail crosses the Colorado River

Photograph by W. L. Rusho

At last! Men, horses, equipment and supplies are across the Colorado. The fathers tell themselves that past days have been a divine test of their courage and, perhaps, a chastisement for any wrongdoing by the expedition.

Prayers of gratitude are offered. Muskets blast heavenward in celebration, sending a foreign sound echoing through the unknown land.

Even as the shots fall, some of

the explorers look shrunken and stooped. The crossing has cost dearly in exertion and endurance. It is as though the river has worn away tons of rock, and shoulder bones, too.

The Franciscans bundle ragged blankets around the grizzled captain.

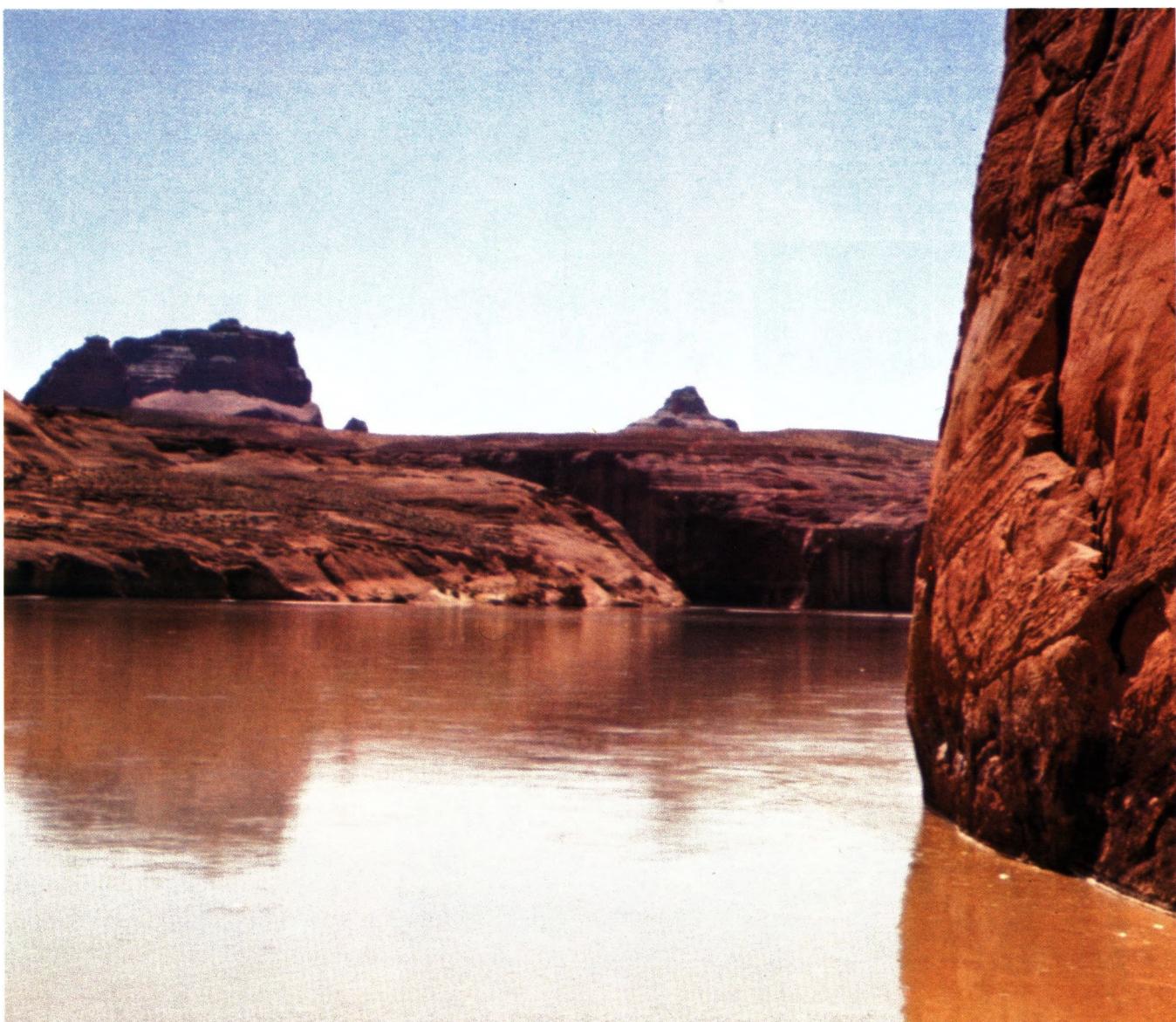
"Alone, alone . . . leave me alone," Miera thinks. "I am content to die. Life has been wonderful. Leave me, leave me . . . in a place overlooking this land of tomorrow. Have snow brush against my face for a winter. Write a testament: 'Here, friend, is Captain Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, one happy man, who died as he lived, face to the front.'"

Miera's feet dangle outside the stirrups. His eyes behold one grave stare after another from his companions. "I do not understand. They are the ones who seem cold and uncomfortable. If this is death, it isn't so bad. There is nothing to fight anymore, only something to embrace."

Riders move ahead to prepare a camp for the freezing Spaniard. In their haste, they forget to replenish the water jars. A great thirst wracks the camp at nightfall. Miera, breathing into the fire, doesn't disturb a flame.

*This was the view of the Dominguez and  
Escalante Expedition as they prepared to cross the  
Colorado River.*

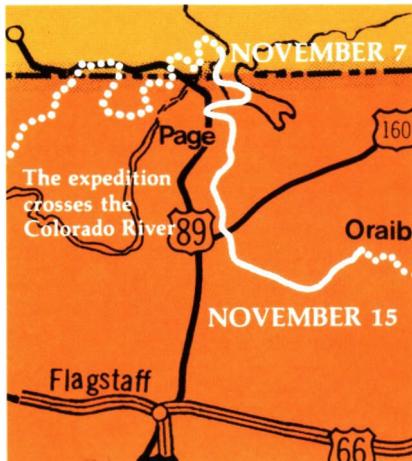
Photograph by W. L. Rusho



Domínguez cannot eat. It pains him to see how thin Joaquín has become. The boy's skin has drawn more tightly over his ribs day by day.

The little needlecovered animal is devoured by men who have never grown accustomed to horsemeat. Miera even feels well enough to partake. Grateful for this unexpected sustenance, the Spaniards name the field *El Espin*, Porcupine.

"There are so many cattle, Father Domínguez. Slaughter a couple now, while the Indians gather seeds. They will



never be missed."

"No Andrés. I cannot allow

that. I want the Hopis to think of us as friends. Taking away their food would create problems."

"Starving is a problem. And we are starving."

"I - I am sorry."

"Sorry? That doesn't satisfy empty stomachs. Is the welfare of infidels more important than our own?"

"Andrés . . ."

"Don't you care about your people? Turn around. Look at the men cling to their saddles. They are starving. Dying. Do you understand?"

"Crossing of the Fathers" site where the Dominguez and Escalante Expedition crossed the Colorado River. Today it is under the waters of Lake Powell as seen below  
Photographs by W. L. Rusho



*Traces of the steps chopped into rock for the purpose of lowering the horses of the 1776 expedition to the Colorado River.*

Photograph by W. L. Rusho



**"Andrés, I implore you to draw nourishment from God."**

**Muñiz angrily kicks at the beasts drifting toward him. He remembers eating the priest's share of porcupine. Thoughts of the animal prick his appetite.**



Photograph by W. L. Rusho

**NOVEMBER 16 -  
NOVEMBER 23**



*Walpi Pueblo on the Hopi First Mesa, Arizona*  
Painting by Wilson Hurley from WITHOUT

NOISE OF ARMS: THE 1776  
DOMÍNGUEZ-ESCALANTE SEARCH  
FOR A ROUTE FROM SANTA FE TO  
MONTEREY

© by Walter Briggs, Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona  
1976

"A Hopi Man"  
photographed by E. S. Curtis  
Courtesy of the Denver Art Museum



"I tell you this. Until you believe in the one true God who governs all, your suffering will not cease. Ally with Him and his Mother Mary, or the Navajo will surely continue to make war."

Father Domínguez sits down. A council of Hopi elders has patiently heard the

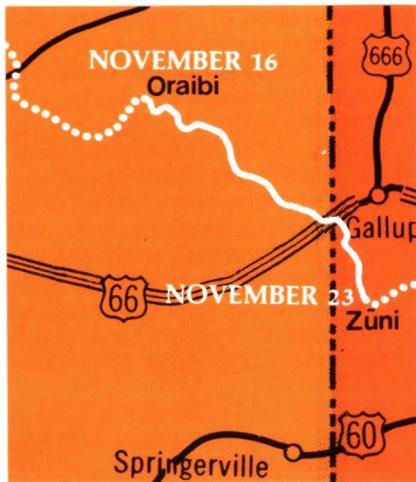
priest. Now, the ancient one, oldest among them, quietly rises and leaves the pueblo. He walks to a rut which runs across the mesa like a scar. The rut was created by the huge logs his people had dragged from the San Francisco mountains, nearly a hundred miles south, to build a mission at Oraibi.

The scar was deep on the land and the people. Enforced labor had not only built the Church, but attended the

needs of its priests. One missionary would not drink from nearby springs, but had demanded instead that runners bring water from fifty miles away. Disobedient Hopis were severely punished. Once an Indian was beaten until blood stained the village streets.

Yes, the ancient one remembered Christianity; a hundred years was not enough time to forget. Rain had ceased along with the traditional ceremonials in 1680. Crops had failed and famine had spread over the land. In despair, the Indians secretly conducted the mid-summer ceremony, *Niman Kachina*. Four days later, the rains began again, proving to the Hopis that the white man's religion was not for them. At dawn one morning the screech of an owl signalled a revolt. Priests fell under flintknives and their bodies were thrown over the cliffs.

Slowly, the leaders drift from the pueblo to follow the ancient one. Domínguez remains inside, waiting for them to return. He is optimistic. He has been allowed to speak for a long time. All the villages welcome the expedition and provide it with goods and supplies. The Hopis need the Spanish



armies to protect them from the fierce Navajo. "Conversion of these people," thought the priest, "will mark a joyous conclusion to months of hard work."

Almost an hour passes. Domínguez grows impatient and goes to the doorway. The sun is so bright that he has to shelter his eyes from the glare. Not far from the pueblo, he sees the tribal council seated, carefully listening to the ancient one who stands, pointing to a rut in the ground.

A woman climbs the side of the mesa, balancing a water jar on her head. It has begun to storm and snow collects on her shoulders. Determined in all

things, like her people the Hopis, she steadily picks a way up the rock.

The priests are leaving, disappointed men. Souls have been lost. The Hopis again refuse to accept salvation. Domínguez turns to take a final look at the pueblos when he notices the woman. He watches snow cover her body and fall into the water jar. At the top of the mesa, she blends perfectly with the sky.

A chant carried in the wind comes down from the Hopi villages. Domínguez does not understand the words at first, but as the storm intensifies, they become clear:

"The perfect one laid out the perfect place  
And gave to us a long span of life,  
Creating song to implant joy  
in life.  
On this path of happiness, we the  
Butterfly Maidens,  
Carry out his wishes by greeting  
our Father Sun.

The song resounds back from our Creator with joy,  
and we of the earth repeat it to our Creator.  
At the appearing of the yellow light,  
Repeats and repeats again the joyful echo,  
Sounds and resounds for times to come."

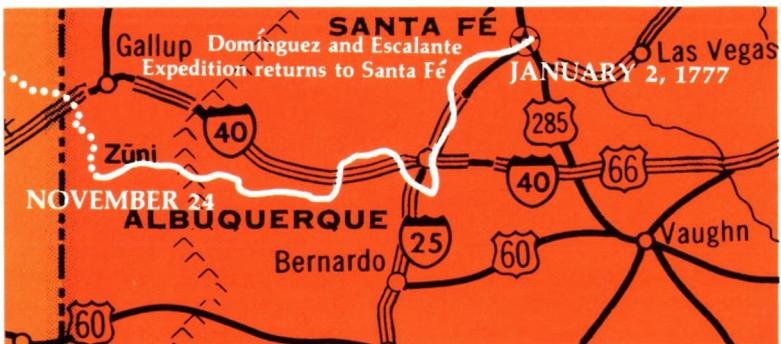
Taken from a traditional Hopi song *Song of Creation*

# NOVEMBER 24 - JANUARY 2, 1777

The shadow of Domínguez fell on the wall. Only the sound of his pen scratching across paper was heard. Escalante fingered his rosary and waited in the candlelight for his superior to finish. Domínguez appeared tired, but the young priest knew he wouldn't overlook anything about the Zuñi mission. The report he was writing would be comprehensive and just.

Last spring, there simply hadn't been time to put things in order. Escalante was

never see his beloved mission again? The troublesome blizzard had persisted. Men were left behind with the horse herd so the missionaries could reach Zuñi as quickly as possible and notify Governor Mendinueta in Santa Fe of the expedition's return. The last days on the trail were extremely cold. Often Domínguez and Escalante dismounted and built a fire to warm themselves. Nevertheless, the priests had entered Zuñi at a gallop and Escalante refused to stop until he stood at the



distracted by preparations for the expedition. Then the Indians raided La Ciénega. Afterwards, his kidneys began to bother him. Records were left in disarray. Children went unbaptized. The church itself was not repaired as it should have been.

Was it only a week ago Escalante worried he would

mission's door, his heart challenging the pounding inside his horse's chest.

The scratching stopped. Domínguez sat up and extended the pen toward his assistant. Escalante was being asked to witness a rather uncomplimentary assessment of his own mission. For a brief moment, the priests

looked at each other. Both understood that although they had become close friends during the past months, superiors in Mexico City did not accept excuses for imperfections.

Escalante took the pen. As he bent to sign his name, snow sprinkled down through a crack in the ceiling and covered the document.

Governor Mendieta was busy and listened only briefly to the priests. They were late. Several missions along the Rio Grande needed to be inspected. Snow had kept them in Acoma for over a week. Dominguez apologized for the delay in reaching Santa Fe from Zuñi. Escalante then presented a diary of the expedition's travels and also the painted hide the Lagunas gave to the Spaniards at Utah Lake. Lastly, he introduced Joaquín.

The boy was apprehensive about Mendieta. The Governor was an impatient man who looked bored over

food that came to him on silver. Too many people were needed to do things for the official that he could do for himself - open doors, pour wine, put on a coat. Joaquín was happy when the time came to leave the palace. Captain Miera remained with the others to see that they were properly paid, and the priests headed toward the mission. The boy could be alone with them again.

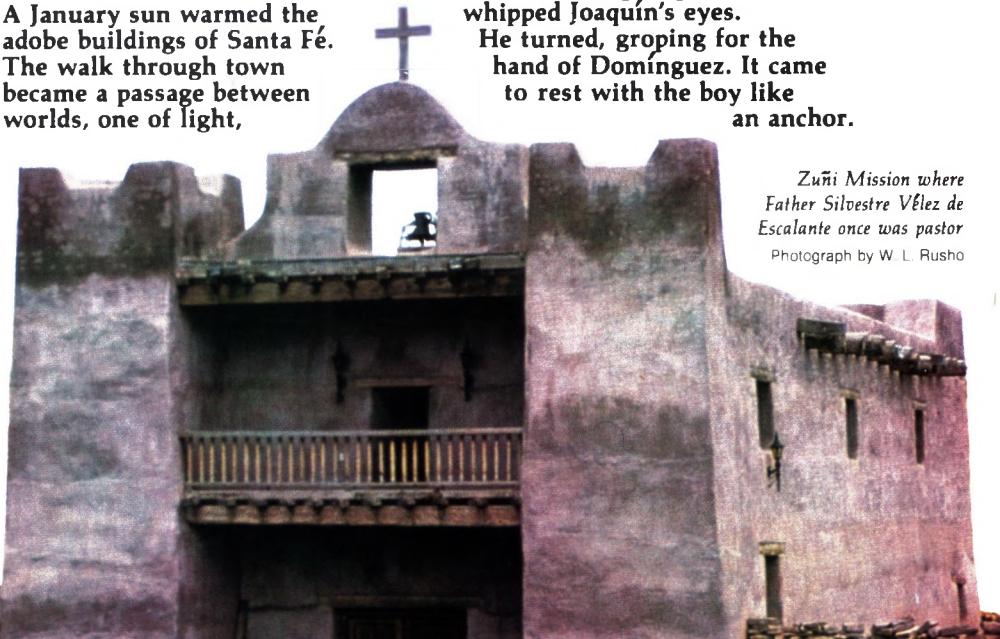
A January sun warmed the adobe buildings of Santa Fé. The walk through town became a passage between worlds, one of light,

the other of shadow. Domínguez and Escalante moved quickly, seemingly oblivious to Joaquín's predicament. He was confused. Mysterious aromas rose from the dark corners of alleyways. People, animals, shops, streets . . . noise swirled about, beckoning the boy in a hundred directions at once.

"Hey, you! Watch where you're going!" yelled the driver as a mule train jangled past. Dust whipped Joaquín's eyes.

He turned, groping for the hand of Domínguez. It came to rest with the boy like an anchor.

Zuñi Mission where Father Silvestre Vélez de Escalante once was pastor  
Photograph by W. L. Rusho





Upon the expedition's return, Father Domínguez was an unpopular man. His early 1776 inspection tour of the missions had been too honest and forthright, and to a certain degree, tactless. During his absence from Santa Fé, several missionaries had written letters to Franciscan authorities in Mexico, complaining of his intolerance toward them. Domínguez chose to journey to Mexico to clarify his position. He arrived at El Paso to discover that he had been relieved of his duties as *custos*, head, of all New Mexican missions. In later years, he was reassigned to various missions and isolated *presidios* throughout New Mexico and northern Mexico. When, in 1805, he died, at age 65, he was chaplain of the Presidio

of Janos in Sonora.

Escalante became missionary friar at the Indian pueblo of San Idefonso in January, 1777. Ever the self-appointed crusader, he continued to write reports on the conduct of his brethren, most of them his seniors, in an effort to force them to reform their unbecoming ways. A kidney ailment constantly plagued him until he finally had to request permission to return to Mexico City for treatment. He died in Parral, Mexico, in April, 1780, at 30.

Almost nothing is known of what happened to the other 1776 expeditioners. Most faded into obscurity. Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco died in 1785, having lived a rich life of high adventure on the northern frontier of New Spain.

Domínguez and Escalante never returned to the Utah Valley as they had promised the *Lagunas* they would do. There were not enough missionaries to attend needs already existing and at the same time extend the frontier. Their missionary expansionist zeal was out of step with the times. Spain was pulling back her frontiers, not pushing them out. What course history might have taken

had Spain followed the recommendations of its explorer priests can only be guessed. If missions had been established in the valley, Spanish institutions, customs, religion and culture might have been brought to Utah. Spain's failure to capitalize on the information furnished by Domínguez and Escalante about the Utah Valley meant that it would not be permanently settled by white men for another 70 years; but it would be settled not by Spanish Catholics, but Anglo-American Mormons from the Midwest.

Speculation aside, the Domínguez and Escalante Expedition of 1776 was an expansion of knowledge. Lands above and west of the northern border of New Spain were first recorded in the mappings of Miera. (See inside back cover) Forty years later, other men would use this information to open the old Spanish Trail to California. Domínguez and Escalante were not Spain's typical *soldados de cuero*, soldiers of the leather coats, bent on conquering native peoples. Rather, they sought and established a rapport with several tribes along the way, an accomplishment uncommon in the annals of the American West. They were men whose strong personal conviction,

high enthusiasm and crusading purpose meshed well with a primitive country where life was, and in some parts still is, reduced to elementary struggle for survival. During 157 days on horseback, they not only travelled across 2,000 miles of some of North America's most challenging terrain, but amidst the mysteries of the

seasons, into the heart of a Laguna boy, and armed only with strength of character into the history of our nation. Ultimately, Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante successfully completed life's most difficult journey, that which leads from the unknown to the known, from ignorance to

knowledge, and from doubt to belief, all ". . . in behalf of the light."

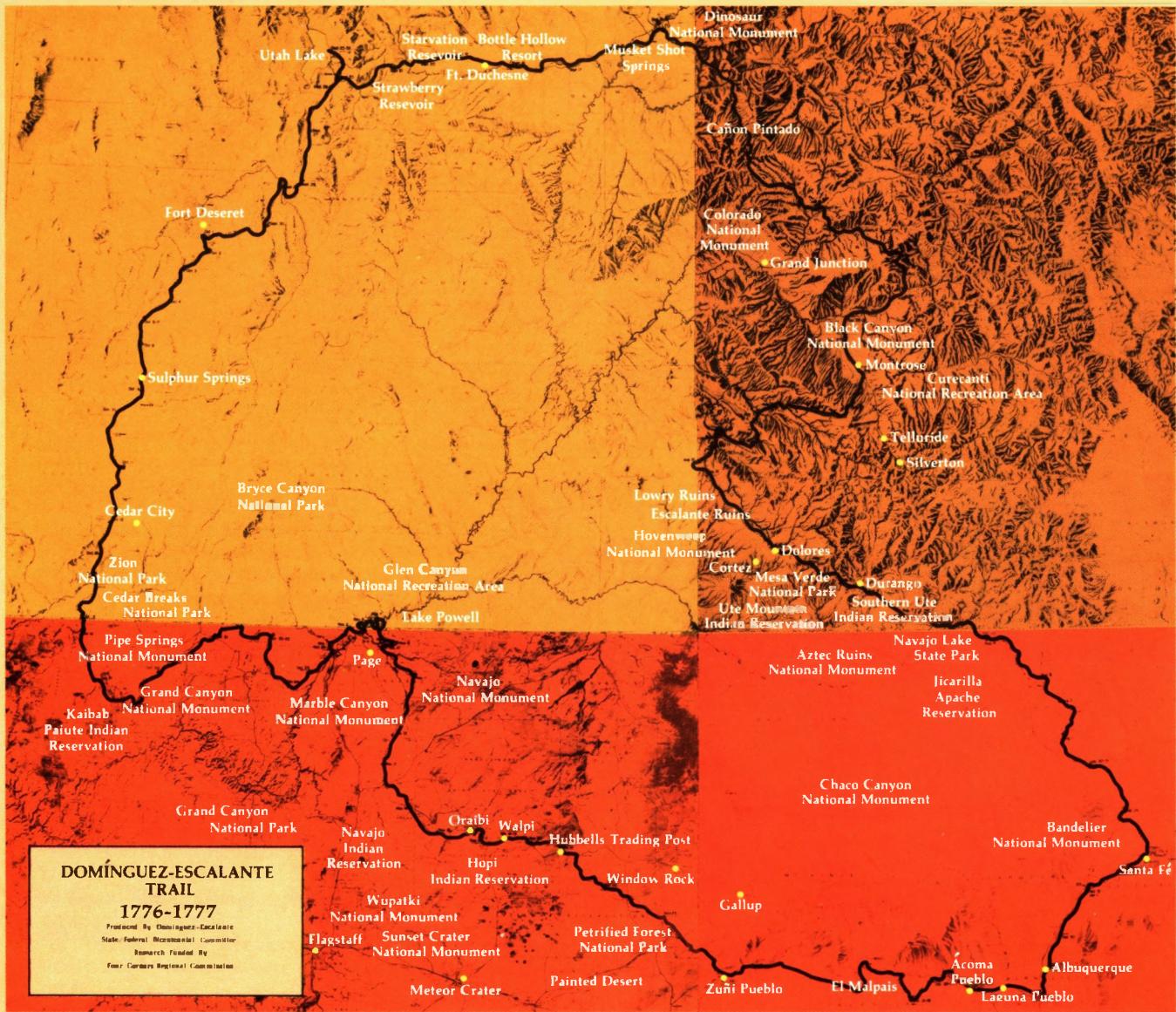
A portion of Father Francisco Atanasio Domínguez's report on the Zuni Mission  
Archives of Archdiocese of Santa Fé  
Pueblo of Acoma  
Book of Baptisms 1725 - 77  
Microfilm copy  
State Records Center and Archives  
Santa Fé, New Mexico

Acta de este Libro de Bautismos por N. R. P. Comiss. Visitador Fr. Juan <sup>co</sup> Atan.º  
Domínguez, y S. P. R. ayer robó sus puestidas, y mando al P. Ministro actual,  
y al Fr en adelante juzgue, y pongan las puestidas segun el orden q. previene  
el Honr. Señor Capo. de Indias q. Aytorice Macacutta, y Aquilani en  
su Edict. y así en las puestidas de Bautismos como en las de Casamiento, y  
Cobijo se ponga el apellido, o distintivo, q. cada uno de los Indios tiene  
y haberlo se ponga el apellido, o distintivo, q. cada uno de los Indios tiene  
en su Yacoma, para evitar confusiones. Am lo que pongo, y firmo ante mí  
en inspiración Pro. Secret. de Pdoy. <sup>de</sup> <sup>o</sup> <sup>o</sup> Amie mi

Fray Fr. Atan.º Domínguez  
Comis.º Visitador

Fr. Silvestre Vélez de Esca-  
lante  
Pro. Sec.

K.



## Zuñi Pueblo

Zuñi is an essential part of understanding the Domínguez and Escalante Expedition. This is the home of four members of the expedition, particularly Father Escalante the pastor of the Franciscan Mission here in 1776 when it was the western outpost of Spanish rule in the southwest. Here, Coronado began his search for the Seven Cities of Cibola in 1540. Zuñi has the longest history of contact with the Spanish and yet has preserved much of its culture, a beautiful blend of two traditions best seen in the colorful murals inside the mission walls. Nearby is El Morro National Monument, a massive sandstone mesa covered with Indian petroglyphs and early Spanish inscriptions.

## El Malpais (The Bad Land)

A broad valley of lava flowed crossed by the Domínguez and Escalante Expedition. Here the Bureau of Land Management has built exhibits and trails to give visitors a sense of the hardship the padres went through as they passed this lava flow. Evidence of Anasazi life, dating back to the time of Christ, can be seen here.

## Gallup and Window Rock

Centers of Navajo culture. At Gallup, the Navajo's adjustment to modern life can be still graphically seen in this rough railroad town, one of the famous stops on "Route 66". To the north is Window Rock, just across the Arizona border. This tribal headquarters holds annual fairs and art exhibitions where the Navajo culture can be fully appreciated. Here also is the Navajo Tribal Museum.

## Southern Pueblos

Ácoma, the sky city, is a fortress village more than 800 years old, perched high above the steep cliffs of a mesa. Laguna, just off Interstate 40 near Grants, provides tourists with several colorful harvest and social dances and festivals throughout the year.

## Albuquerque

Visit "Old Town," the pleasant early Spanish plaza that survives as a well preserved oasis amidst the skyscrapers and automobiles of this modern city. Here are many shops and restaurants that reflect the flavor of Spanish and Indian life at the time of Domínguez and Escalante.

# POINTS OF INTEREST

## Pueblos of the Rio Grande River Valley

These are the adobe walled villages that Coronado first saw in his conquest of 1540, searching for the Seven Cities of Cíbola. Though the pueblo's style of Indian architecture can be seen as far west as the Hopi Mesas of northern Arizona, a concentrated group of pueblos are within a convenient day's journey near Santa Fé. San Juan Pueblo, center of the earliest Spanish rule, now serves as the center for the Eight Northern Pueblos, an organization devoted to the rebirth of Pueblo Indian interest in their own arts, crafts, and history.

San Juan Pueblo, then, must be the first stop on a visit to the pueblos that surround Santa Fé, even though the impressive apartment houses of famous old Taos may be more tempting. At Taos, the pink-brown walls of the terraced apartment villages blend well with the beautiful foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

## Santa Fé

The oldest capital city in America, Santa Fé was founded under orders from the viceroy of New Spain in 1609 by Governor Pedro de Peralta,

eleven years before the pilgrim landing at Plymouth Rock. Replacing the San Pueblo capital that Don Juan de Onate founded in 1598, Santa Fé served as the center of Spanish rule for 200 years. As a center for exploration and mission work among the Indians, Santa Fé was the natural starting place for the Domínguez and Escalante Expedition. Later, it was the end of the famous Santa Fé Trail to Missouri, the trade route between Mexico and the United States.

Famous for its indigenous architectural style, Santa Fé is a successful mix of Pueblo Indian and Spanish style building with later Territorial modification after Santa Fé became U.S. property in 1846. This is characterized by thick adobe walls that surround rectangular houses. The roof is built with logs covered with small poles, brush and tamped earth. Wooden spouts would puncture the parapet to drain the flat roof. Even today, these elements are used in modern buildings of the city, giving it an overall pleasing appearance.

While in Santa Fé, visit the Canyon Road Artist Community and the many museums of Indian and folk art and anthropology.

## Anasazi sites in New Mexico

Close to the Pueblos near Santa Fé are the ruins of Bandelier National Monument, a site of an Anasazi culture that eventually moved out in the 13th Century and joined the existing pueblos of the Rio Grande River.

Chaco Canyon, isolated in the San Juan Basin west of Santa Fé, has the best examples of Anasazi stone masonry. Of particular interest is the unusual five-story Pueblo Bonito, a coliseum-like village in the shape of a "D" with a central court.

The Aztec Ruins National Monument is an impressive village, near Farmington (south of Mesa Verde, Colorado), that was occupied two different times by Anasazi for eight hundred years until an extended drought drove the Indians out at the end of the 13th Century.

## Other Points of Interest in Northern New Mexico

Navajo Lake State Park and the Jicarilla Apache Reservation provide ample recreation near the Colorado border.

## Southwestern Colorado

This mountainous region has a fascinating past starting with

the Anasazi ruins of Mesa Verde (near Cortez) and Lowry Ruins (near Dolores). These sites provide a tantalizing glimpse of what must have been a rich culture.

### **Ute Mountain and Southern Ute Reservations**

For several hundred years, Utes had complete control over the dense forests and steep mountains of western Colorado. At these reservations down on the New Mexico border, their culture is still visible in annual festivals and dances, particularly at Ignacio, the Southern Ute headquarters south of the towering Chimney Rock.

In the mountain towns of Durango, Silverton and Telluride are remnants of the wild past of mining towns where fortunes were won and lost overnight. Now these towns survive as ski resorts or tourist attractions. From Durango, a popular narrow-gauge railroad train climbs up the spectacular San Juan mountains to the gutsy old mining town of Silverton.

### **Escalante Ruins near Dolores**

Under development by the Interior Departments Bureau of Land Management, these ruins were discovered on August 13, 1776, by Domínguez

and Escalante as they moved through southwestern Colorado. The first to be seen by white men in Colorado, the Escalante Ruins, like the more famous Mesa Verde Ruins, give a rough idea of early man in the southwest.

### **Montrose**

Near Montrose is an excellent museum of Ute Indian culture. The grounds of the Museum was once the home of Chief Ouray, one of the Ute's greatest leaders. On the Gunnison River nearby, is the Black Canyon National Monument, a awesome 2,725 foot deep chasm, and the Curecanti National Recreation Area.

### **Grand Junction**

An attractive modern city on the Colorado River; close by is the Colorado National Monument, where steep cliffs and ridges reveal fascinating geological formations.

### **Cañon Pintado**

Located in Douglas Creek Canyon are cliffs with paintings of weapons and fight scenes created by early Anasazi people. Domínguez and Escalante discovered these in early September of 1776 south of present day Rangeley. The Bureau of Land

Management has developed the site to help visitors experience the Domínguez-Escalante Trail.

### **Dinosaur National Monument**

On the border between Utah and Colorado on the Green River, this center displays a working excavation of the fossils of gigantic prehistoric reptiles and mammals.

### **Musket Shot Springs near Jensen, Utah**

The Bureau of Land Management has developed this site where Domínguez and Escalante entered Utah. Here at two fresh springs "a musket shot apart," the explorers camped for two days in early 1776 and shot a buffalo for fresh meat. They called it "Las Fuentes de Santa Clara" (Fountains of Saint Clare).

### **Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area**

North of Vernal, Utah, on the Wyoming border, Flaming Gorge well deserves its name. This colorful canyon is dammed, creating a large lake for water sports in the red rock canyons topped with forests of piñon pine and juniper. Below the dam, guided river trips are available to take you through the

dangerous Green River rapids and canyons that John Wesley Powell "conquered" back in 1860.

### Bottle Hollow Resort

A motel and recreation complex (near Ft. Duchesne, Utah) built and run by the Uintah-Ouray Utes, Bottle Hollow is the starting place for Indian-guided pack trips into the rugged High Uintas or river trips down the Green. Here, Ute artwork is available and information on annual festivals. From here, a traveller may try to explore the site near Randlett where Escalante saw ancient Indian ruins.

### Starvation and Strawberry Reservoirs

These man-made fishing lakes cover portions of the Domínguez-Escalante Trail along the Duchesne and Strawberry Rivers and are popular recreation resources.

### Wasatch Mountains

Overlooking Utah Valley, the Wasatch Mountains offer many picnic and camping spots. Here are some of the finest ski slopes in the world as well as reservoirs for water sports. On Mt. Timpanogos, an interesting cavern and hiking trail attract many tourists.

### Utah Lake

This is where the Fathers envisioned a future beautiful mission among the Utes and possibly a great city of the Spanish Empire. The lake is now lined along its eastern shore by bustling communities.

### Fish Lake National Forest

In the hills and valleys of the central Utah Plateaus are many camping and fishing sites where Kit Carson once camped along the Old Spanish Trail.

### Delta to Milford

From historic Fort Deseret, an early Mormon defense against the Indians, one can travel on the desolate Great Basin which Escalante crossed on foot during a cold, wet winter. Near Milford, the padres cast lots to decide their return to Santa Fé.

### Sulphur Springs

A Bureau of Land Management site developed to tell the story of Domínguez and Escalante's desert ordeal. In an early October blizzard the suffering of the padres and their group forced them to turn back to Santa Fé, abandoning their goal of reaching Monterey, California. The three "springs of hot sulphurous water . . . and small patches of

ground covered with salt peter" were omens of the misfortune awaiting them in Nevada's great basin if they had decided to continue. The famous "Casting of the Lots" near here convinced them to turn back from almost certain death.

### Cedar City

The largest city in southern Utah is a good base for excursions to the famous Cedar Breaks, Bryce Canyon and Zion Nation Park where one can view some of the most dramatic geological wonders of the world. One can also witness some of the world's greatest literary wonders, the plays of William Shakespeare, performed in a popular summer festival at Southern Utah State College.

### Pipe Springs, Arizona

Close to the Utah border, on the Kaibab Paiute Reservation, is a picturesque old Mormon settlement that contains beautiful stone houses set over springs feeding an irrigated farm.

### Grand Canyon

The vast gorge of this National Park is, of course, a necessary stop for anyone visiting the Southwest. One of the world's greatest wonders, these

cliffs, plateaus and platforms display the oldest rocks of the earth, all carved by the rushing fall of the mighty Colorado River.

### Glen Canyon Dam and National Recreation Area

The dam holds back the Colorado at this steep narrow canyon to form the massive Lake Powell. Boaters can travel up to the many side canyons into areas of scenic power previously available only to the hardiest backpackers. At Padre Pay, just above the dam, the lake covers the evidence of the Crossing of the Fathers. Page, Arizona, to the east of the dam, houses the John Wesley Powell Museum where one can get an idea of the Colorado's power before Lake Powell was formed.

### Marble Canyon

South of Page is a long, steep and narrow gorge cut by the Colorado as it begins its dramatic fall into the Grand Canyon. The steel bridge at Marble Canyon was for many years the highest bridge of its kind.

### Navajo Indian Reservation

The reservation covers much of the northwestern corner of Arizona and into New Mexico and Utah. At the Utah

border are the famous buttes of Monument Valley, impressive sentinels on the broad flat desert. To the south are the Anasazi ruins of the Navajo National Monument where the predecessors of the Hopi first dwelt.

### The Hopi Reservation

The Hopis live on three mesas in the middle of the Navajo Reservation along the desert highway from Tuba City to Window Rock. For more than 800 years, these Indians have lived here in adobe villages above the mesa cliffs where they perform many rituals of their complex religion, including the famous Snake Dance.

### At Flagstaff, Arizona

In the foothills of the high San Francisco Mountains is the famous Lowell Observatory, scene of many astronomical discoveries. Close by, the Museum of Northern Arizona has probably the best display and exhibition of the Indian cultures of the Southwest. To the north of Flagstaff is still another Anasazi site, Wupatki National Monument.

### Meteor Crater and Sunset Crater

These geographical phenomena, both outside Flagstaff, add a strangeness to the broad desert vistas.

### Painted Desert

In a broad area just off the Interstate 40, the plateau takes on brilliant hues, adding still another element of fantasy to the incredible Southwest landscape.

### Petrified Forest

Just east of Holbrook, Arizona are scattered heaps of silica skeletons of massive cedar and pine logs left by a prehistoric forest 200 million years ago. At the museum here, are polished slabs of petrified wood and panoramas of the Painted Desert.

### Hubbells Trading Post

Near the settlement of Ganado is the oldest trading post on the Navajo Reservation. It was operated by man whom the Indians deeply respected. Now, besides selling some of the finest examples of Navajo crafts, Hubbells has exhibits of Southwestern history and Indian art.

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Joseph Cerquone resides in Denver, Colorado, and is a member of the Domínguez-Escalante Bicentennial Expedition (DEBE) which is planned for the summer and fall of 1976. He has been endorsed by the Domínguez-Escalante State-Federal Bicentennial Committee as the DEBE's recorder/diarist. IN BEHALF OF THE LIGHT is Mr. Cerquone's first published work on events related to the Domínguez-Escalante Trail area.

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Council Hall - State Capitol  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Greyhound World Tours  
Greyhound Tower  
Phoenix, Arizona 85077

# DOMÍNGUEZ Y ESCALANTE EXPEDITION 1776 1976



"Two centuries ago, Fathers Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante explored the Southwest as men of peace. Our intent is to commemorate that exploration, for we, too, ride as individuals, adventurers on a trail of discovery, ready to receive fresh impressions, eager for new horizons, not in the spirit of militant conquerors to enforce ourselves or our ideas, but to identify in and unify with whatever we are able to recognize as significantly a part of ourselves.

We, of a society which complexifies daily and where truth is the glimmer of an obscure star, look upon our time on the trail as a period of renewal for ourselves and for all which lies in our path. May our coming foster a greater understanding of, and among, ourselves and our neighbors—Native, Hispanic, and Anglo-Americans. May it signal a deep, unabashed love of our Mother, Nature, in all Her dominions; and may She, in forgiving Her children their human frailties, rest a gentle hand upon us."



The Dominguez-Escalante Bicentennial Expedition

On July 29, 1976, the Domínguez-Escalante Bicentennial Expedition (DEBE) will depart Santa Fe, New Mexico, to retrace on horseback the entire trail blazed by Fathers Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante two hundred years ago.

The DEBE will be neither a reenactment nor a pageant, but an authentic twentieth century expedition aimed at commemorating the spirit of the 1776 exploration. A nonprofit corporation supported by public and private grants and donations, the DEBE has achieved official recognition by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, the Bicentennial Commissions of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona, and the Navajo Nation. Many communities proximate to the Dominguez-Escalante Trail are planning events to coincide with the coming of the DEBE to which the public is cordially invited.

# The Dominguez-Escalante Trail

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### June - December 1976

- 1-30:** Promontory, Utah. A reenactment of the driving of the Golden Spike, is scheduled for 10am, 1pm, 3pm, and 5 pm daily.
- 1-27:** Salt Lake City, Utah. Hansen's Planetarium presents a 50 min. Star Program on American Indian Lore entitled "The People".
- 5:** Ogden, Utah. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Utah Symphony presents a Bicentennial concert at 4:30 & 8:00 p.m.
- 11-13:** Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Indian School Campus hosts the 9th annual Inter-Tribal Pow Wow with most of the Southwest tribes represented.
- 13:** Zuñi, New Mexico. Local church officials offer a Trinitine Mass at the Old Mission Zuñi Pueblo. **The Dominguez-Escalante Bicentennial Expedition (DEBE) will be present.**
- 13:** Sandia, San Ildefonso, San Juan, Santa Clara and Taos Pueblos host the San Antonio Feast Day in New Mexico.
- 13:** Dominguez-Escalante Trail Bicentennial Motorcoach Tour departs Albuquerque.
- 13-9/20:** Springdale, Utah. One hundred day Bicentennial Film Festival at Zion National Park presents a special motion picture series on Bicentennial and historical subjects at 3:00 p.m. daily.
- 15-8/25:** Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado hosts historical campfire program at Split Mountain Campground.
- 21-7/30:** Santa Fé, New Mexico. The Governor's Gallery in the Capitol Building will be the site of an exhibit of art in New Mexico in 1776.
- 21:** Grand Junction, Colorado hosts Bicentennial parade of Colorado music with original concert music by Colorado composers. The show will be presented at Mesa College.
- 25-7/5:** Flagstaff, Arizona. The 1976 Pow Wow features competitive Indian dances, parades and a bazaar.
- 25-27:** Albuquerque Fairgrounds is the site for the annual New Mexican Arts and Crafts Fair with a Bicentennial keynote exhibit.
- 25-7/15:** Navajo Tribal Museum at Window Rock, Arizona hosts the traveling exhibit, "Arizona 1776-1976".
- 27:** Dominguez-Éscalante Trail Bicentennial Motorcoach Tour departs Albuquerque.
- July**
- 4:** Alamogordo, New Mexico. The dedication of the International Space Hall of Fame which includes an auditorium, exhibits hall, planetarium, library, archive center, observatory and work bench communication systems. The features include educational displays, documentary movies, reenactments of space launches and dynamic simulators for audience participation in sensations of space experience.
- 4:** All cities and towns along the trail and within a 100 mile radius host individual 4th of July celebrations. To receive information on the events you wish to attend please contact the Chamber of Commerce in each area.
- 11:** Belén, New Mexico hosts the 1-Million-Mile Bicentennial Bike-a-thon riders at their stop here on their Las Vegas, Nevada to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania journey.
- 16-31:** Gunnison, Colorado. The Curecanti National Recreation Bicentennial Programs at Elk Creek Visitor Center offer films, slide shows and exhibits on American heritage and the role of National Parks.
- 21:** Cortez, Colorado. Mesa Verde National Park Service presents "People of 1776", plays featuring various aspects of colonial life (military, music and crafts).
- 23-24:** Ignacio, Colorado hosts the Southern Ute Tribe Community Bicentennial Festival and Inter-Tribal Pow Wow with parades, arts and crafts displays, and a rodeo.
- 24:** Salt Lake City, Utah. *The Deseret News* Marathon is a foot race along the historic pioneer trail into Salt Lake Valley.
- 24:** Chama, New Mexico. A Bicentennial Roundup features equestrians from Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming with a rodeo, parade, barbecue and show.
- 29:** **Santa Fé, New Mexico:** The commencement ceremonies for the DEBE begin with a mass offered by the Most Reverend Robert F. Sanchez, Archbishop of Santa Fé. The departure celebrations will be hosted by state and federal Bicentennial officials. Governor Gerald Apodaca of New Mexico commissions the expedition to present him with a report of their travels upon its return to Santa Fe approximately December 1, 1976.
- 31:** Abiquiú, New Mexico. Mass offered at the Santa Rosa de Lima de Abiquiú site at 6:00 p.m., followed by a multi-media presentation of "La Tierra Bendita" in the Abiquiú High School gymnasium.
- August**

**1:** Colorado Day: Events honoring Colorado Statehood will take place statewide.

**8:** Dominguez-Escalante Trail Bicentennial Motorcoach Tour departs Albuquerque.

**8-15:** Ouray, Colorado hosts week long historical pageant and plays with a Centennial-Bicentennial theme.

**9-14:** Navajo Nation, Arizona celebrates the original Dominguez-Escalante Trail Ride.

**11-15:** Gallup, New Mexico hosts the 55th Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial at Red Rock State Park. This is one of the oldest and largest Indian events which is open to all tribes.

**11:** Mancos, Colorado welcomes the DEBE with a festival and parade by the Centennial-Bicentennial Commission (This is the first stop for the riders in Colorado.)

**12:** Highway 184, Mancos to Dolores, Colorado is renamed the "Dominguez-Escalante Bicentennial Highway".

**13:** Dolores, Colorado: The DEBE is present for the dedication of Indian ruins sighted by the original explorers as the "Escalante Ruins" by Bureau of Land Management officials.

**13-15:** Montrose, Colorado. Monte de Rosas Fiestas, a street festival commemorates Native and Mexican-American cultures from noon to midnight in the city market parking lot.

**26-30:** Telluride, Colorado presents an International Film Festival with 50 films shown in four different theaters. Six American premiers and several world premiers will be featured as well as the honoring of three filmmakers.

**22-28:** Wendover, Utah. The Bonneville National Speed Trials at Bonneville Salt Flats.

**27:** Montrose, Colorado will host the United States Armed Forces Bicentennial Caravan which is composed to exhibit vans for each branch of the military. The theme is "The History of the Armed Forces and their Contributions to the Nation". DEBE rides in morning municipal parade.

**Late August:** Arizona: The Hopi Indian Reservation's Annual Ceremonial Dances; dates and villages are announced about 10 days prior to the ceremony. Some dances may be closed to the public.

## September

**3-5:** Window Rock, Arizona. Navajo Nation Fair with the theme "Festivals in Navajoland".

**3-6:** Santa Fé, New Mexico is the site of the 264th Annual Fiesta de Santa Fé. This is the largest and most renowned fiesta in the Southwest celebrating the reconquest of New Mexico in 1692 with parades, pageants and arts and crafts.

**5:** Domínguez-Escalante Trail Bicentennial Motorcoach Tour departs Albuquerque.

**10-11:** Rangely, Colorado hosts Domínguez-Escalante Festival in conjunction with the Rangely Centennial-Bicentennial Commission. The DEBE will be present at the ceremonies.

**15:** DEBE crosses the Green River and is welcomed to Utah. At Dinosaur National Monument in ceremonies hosted by The National Park Service.

**19-21:** Phoenix, Tucson and Arizona Border Towns celebrate the Annual Mexican Independence Day.

**19-25:** Ouray, Colorado. This small mountain town hosts a photo contest and exhibit of history of southwest Colorado celebrating 100 years of photography in the San Juan Mountains as well as 100 years of the area.

**23:** Spanish Fork, Utah: The DEBE is on hand for the dedication of the Dominguez-Escalante Monument, Dominguez Hill and the Spanish Fair.

**24:** Spanish Fork, Utah hosts an Indian Fair and a Dominguez-Escalante rodeo.

**25:** Springville, Utah hosts Domínguez-Escalante Rodeo and pageant of Utah Valley history.

**26:** Payson, Utah is the site of a Mass at San Andreas Church  
**28:** where the DEBE riders are expected.

**12/31:** Flagstaff, Arizona: 37 panels with films and video tapes will be used to depict the 3 Spanish parties which crossed Arizona in 1776 and their influence on colonization of the Southwest and the tradition of today; presented by the Arizona Historical Society and Heard Museum.

## October

**1-31:** Northeastern Arizona presents its portion of the Four Corners States reenactment of the 1776 Domínguez-Escalante Expedition.

**1-3:** Albuquerque, New Mexico. The St. George Creek Orthodox Church presents the Annual Greek Festival with food, bazaars, folk dancing, coffee house, art and games.

**2-3:** La Ciénega, New Mexico presents Harvest Festival at the Old Ciénega Village Museum with demonstrations of 18th Century ranch crafts such as spinning, soapmaking and blacksmithing.

**10:** Dominguez-Escalante Trail Bicentennial Motorcoach Tour departs Albuquerque.

**17:** Phoenix, Arizona hosts a Bicentennial Western Jubilee with a traditional and country music festival.

**Late Page, Arizona hosts the DEBE upon its arrival.**

**October:** Lake Powell, Arizona. A reenactment of the Crossing of the Fathers takes place by boat. Mass will be held when the DEBE crosses the lake at the same site that the 1776 party crossed the Colorado River.

## November

**2-continued:** Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Museum of Albuquerque reopens the permanent exhibit of a "House of New Mexico".

**15:** El Morro National Monument, New Mexico. The DEBE participants inscribe their names on a sandstone slab which will be permanently displayed at the El Morro Visitor Center. The DEBE is hosted in the evening at a barbecue supper.

**20-12/31:** Phoenix, Arizona hosts the "Arizona 1776-1976" traveling exhibit at Heard Museum.

**25:** Salt Lake City, Utah. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir Thanksgiving and Patriotic Concert, a live performance which will also be broadcasted over television and radio.

## December

**5-6:** Los Alamos, New Mexico. The Los Alamos Light Opera **12-13:** presents the play "1776".

**6:** Albuquerque, New Mexico. Albuquerque Old Town presents reredos to Saint Felipe de Neri Church, a reenactment of reredos described in the Dominguez-Escalante Journal of 1776.

**12:** Santa Fé, New Mexico. Santuario de Guadelupe, Feast of Our Lady of Guadelupe in the restoration of an unique 18th Century religious sanctuary with special services and procession.

**20-28:** Sandia Ski Area, New Mexico. Torchlight luminaria parades each evening.

**25:** Salt Lake City, Utah. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir presents a Christmas and Patriotic Concert both live and broadcasted over radio and television.

For more information on the DEBE and events related to the Dominguez- Escalante Trail during 1976, please contact:

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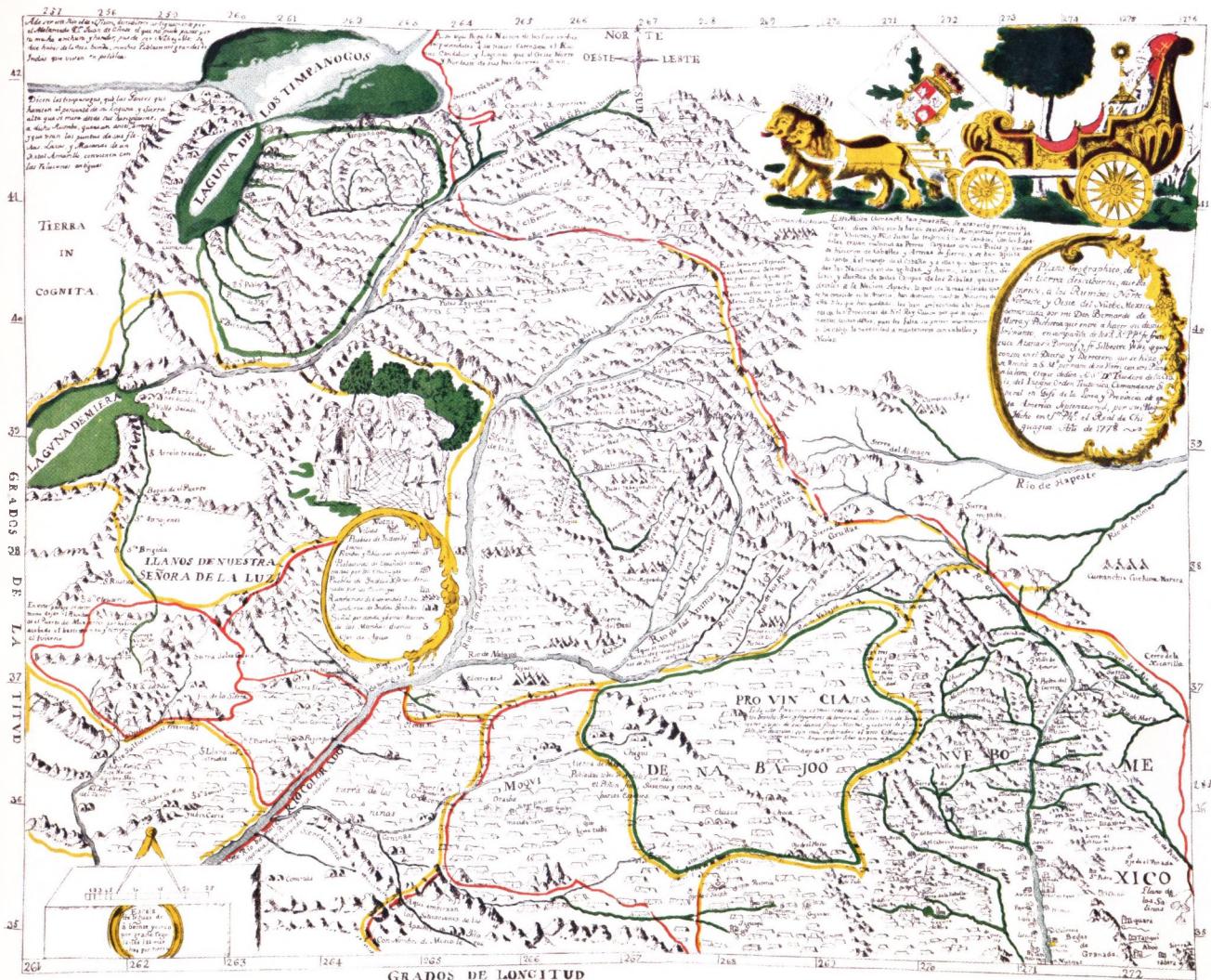
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Don Bernard Miera y Pacheco's map of the territory covered by the Dominguez and Escalante Expedition of 1776  
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